

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) *In vitro* serological diagnosis method in which, in a sample to be tested, the presence is detected of antibodies specific to an infectious microbial agent, characterized in that it is controlled that said sample to be tested contains a human serum by detecting whether human immunoglobulins react with an antigen containing protein A from a *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium.

2. (original) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 1, characterized in that :

- the sample to be tested is caused to react with a first antigen (Ag₁) containing protein A, preferably all or part of a *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium containing protein A, and

- the presence is detected of an antigen-antibody reaction product (Ag₁-Ac₁) in which the antibody (Ac₁) is a human immunoglobulin, by causing said reaction product (Ag₁-Ac₁) to react with a detection substance which is a substance reacting with a human immunoglobulin and not reacting with said first antigen (Ag₁).

3. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 1—~~or~~—2, characterized in that the following steps are performed, in which:

a) on a solid substrate are deposited said first antigen containing protein A (Ag₁), and at least one second antigen (Ag₂) which is characteristic of a microbial infectious agent (Ag₂), and

b) the said first antigen (Ag₁) and second (Ag₂) antigen(s) are caused to react with a sample to be tested, and

c) it is detected whether a human immunoglobulin (Ac₁) reacts with said first antigen (Ag₁) by causing the reaction product (Ag₁-Ac₁) to react with a secondary detection antibody (Ac₂) which is a labelled anti-human immunoglobulin which does not react with protein A.

4. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 1, characterized in that said first antigen is a whole *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium containing protein A.

5. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in ~~claim 1any of claims 1 to 4~~, characterized in that the presence is detected of a said reaction product (Ag₁-Ac₁) with an anti-human immunoglobulin (Ac₂) which is an immunoglobulin of animal origin, preferably goat or chick immunoglobulin.

6. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in ~~claim 1any of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that the presence is detected of a reaction product of said first antigen (Ag₁) with a human immunoglobulin (Ac₁) using a substance labelled by fluorescent marking, in particular an anti-human immunoglobulin labelled with fluorescein.

7. (original) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 6, characterized in that:

- a series of tests is performed at increasing dilutions of the sample to be tested and the detection substance (Ac₂) is applied which is an immunoglobulin conjugated with a fluorescent substance, and
- it is verified whether a reaction product (Ag₁-Ac₁-Ac₂) can be detected by fluorescence at a dilution of the sample to be tested of 1/200 or less.

8. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in ~~claim 1any of claims 1 to 7~~, characterized in that said infectious microbial agent consisting of said second antigen is chosen from among micro-organisms containing a bacterium, a virus, a parasite or a fungus.

9. (original) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 8, characterized in that said second antigen (Ag₂) is an intracellular bacterium or a virus.

10. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in ~~claim 8 or 9~~, characterized in that said second antigen is chosen from among bacteria of the genus *Rickettsia*, *Coxiella*, *Bartonella*, *Tropheryma*, *Ehrlichia*, *Chlamydia*, *Mycoplasma*, *Treponema*, *Borrelia*, and *Leptospira*.

11. (original) Serological diagnosis method as in claim 10, characterized in that said second antigen corresponding to the infectious microbial agent is a bacterium responsible for endocarditis.

12. (currently amended) Serological diagnosis method as in ~~claim 9 either of claims 9 to 10~~, characterized in that said second antigen corresponding to said infectious microbial agent is a viral antigen chosen from among the H.I.V., C.M.V. or Epstein-Barr viruses.

13. (currently amended) Diagnosis kit which can be used to implement the method as in ~~claim 1any of claims 1 to 12~~, characterized in that it includes at least one

positive control controlling inclusion of a human serum in the sample to be tested comprising a said first antigen containing protein A (Ag₁) and reagents enabling the detection of the presence of a reaction product of said first antigen with a human immunoglobulin (Ac₁).

14. (original) Diagnosis kit as in claim 13 , characterized in that it includes :

- a solid substrate on which a said first protein A-containing antigen has been deposited (Ag₁) and a said second antigen corresponding to an infectious microbial agent (Ag₂) to be detected, and

- a detection substance (Ac₁) to detect a reaction product of said first antigen with a human immunoglobulin containing a labelled anti-human immunoglobulin which is a goat or chick immunoglobulin labelled with fluorescent marking.